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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 613

By Davis L

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Mr. Lester Goforth upon his receipt of numerous military service medals and for his meritorious service during World War II.

WHEREAS, our country was conceived by individuals willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure this nation's freedom, and the Volunteer State is especially proud to have so many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty; and

WHEREAS, the preservation of peace and freedom for America and its allies throughout the world depends, as it has for more than two hundred years, on the service, steadfastness, and sacrifice of the men and women of our armed forces; and

WHEREAS, thousands of Tennesseans have continued this time-honored tradition of volunteerism through service in the U.S. Navy Armed Guard and our other armed forces; and

WHEREAS, Lester Goforth has served with courage and gallantry and deserves proper recognition for heroism both in the U.S. Navy and in society today; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Goforth served his country with great bravery and ability during World War II; his service took him all over the world to many locations, including Hiroshima, Japan in the aftermath of the first atomic bomb; and

WHEREAS, Lester Goforth also rendered admirable service in the European and African Theatres; and

WHEREAS, for valiantly serving his country, the U.S. Navy promised Mr. Goforth an assortment of honors and awards, but he never received them; and

WHEREAS, last year, Mr. Goforth wrote to the Board of Correction of Naval Records for a list of the ships on which he served during the war; and

WHEREAS, on November 12 of 1999, three weeks after he received the requested list and the day after Veterans' Day, a nondescript manila envelope arrived in Lester's mailbox containing several tiny boxes that held his long-promised medals; and

WHEREAS, the medals that Mr. Goforth received included an American Campaign Medal, an Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with four Bronze Stars, a European-African-Middle East Campaign medal, a Navy Good Conduct Medal, a Navy Occupation SCV Medal with Asia Clasp, and a World War II Victory Medal; in addition, he is also due the Insignias Amphibious Force, a Philippine Presidential Unit Citation – Foreign, and a Philippine Liberation Ribbon – Foreign with two Bronze Stars, but the Navy is not able to issue these medals because they are given by other countries; and

WHEREAS, even though he has known that he deserved the medals since December 23, 1945, Lester never pursued the matter, because he "was too young and knowed everything and didn't care too much about 'em"; and

WHEREAS, the 12th of 14 children of a Taylorsville, North Carolina family, Lester answered his patriotic call to duty at the age of 17 when he enlisted in the U.S. Navy in June of 1942, because he "didn't like what the Japanese did to Pearl Harbor"; and

WHEREAS, after completing boot camp, Mr. Goforth was drafted into the Armed Guard, a division of the U.S. Navy that manned guns and protected cargo ships taking supplies to American troops; and

WHEREAS, his tour of duty took him to England, North Africa, Saudi Arabia, Australia, Okinawa (where some of the war's most vicious battles took place), and Hiroshima after the atomic bomb, the deadliest weapon of all time, had been dropped; and

WHEREAS, after his honorable discharge at the end of World War II, Lester moved all across this great land of ours, from Montana to North Carolina, then to Pennsylvania, and finally to Michigan, before settling down in the Crossville area of Tennessee after his retirement ten years ago; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Goforth keeps in touch with fellow veterans through his active participation in the Cumberland Seniors, a group that exists for the area Navy Armed Guard, Merchant Marines, and Navy World War II veterans and their spouses to talk over old times and have fun; and

WHEREAS, Lester Goforth exemplifies the spirit and dedication that are characteristic of a true Tennessean, and his valiant efforts reflect the highest credit upon himself, the U.S. Navy Armed Guard, and this nation as a whole; and

WHEREAS, Lester Goforth has performed his duties with the utmost skill, dedication and professionalism; his military service can only be categorized as outstanding; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we hereby honor and commend Lester Goforth from Crossville upon his receipt of many World War II military service medals, salute his courageous and meritorious service to the United States and to the State of Tennessee as a member of the U.S. Navy Armed Guard, and offer our thanks for a difficult job well done.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.